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ABSTRACT

Each spring students in fifth, seventh and ninth grades in the San Diego City Schools complete a series of tests as part of the annual Districtwide Testing Program. The Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) are used to measure student knowledge of various broad areas of the curriculum. This bulletin presents results of student achievement in reading, language, and mathematics for 1982 through 1985. The results are given in median percentile ranks and are illustrated by tables and graphs for each subject by grade level and school year. Short answers are given to the following questions which are frequently asked about testing in the district: (1) Does the CTBS measure everything taught in San Diego schools? (2) What is a "standardized norm-referenced achievement test"? (3) How does San Diego City Schools use the CTBS results to help students? (4) If a student scores below the norm in reading, does that mean he/she is a poor reader? (5) Wouldn't it be worthwhile to try to teach all students to perform at or above the national norm? (6) What test results are being reported for schools? (JAZ)

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DISTRICTWIDE TEST RESULTS, SPRING 1985

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INTRODUCTION

Each spring students at three grade levels in the San Diego City Schools complete a series of tests as part of the annual Districtwide Testing Program. The Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) have been used for the past several years for students in the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades. These tests measure student knowledge of various broad areas of the curriculum. They have norms and provide a means of evaluating achievement of the fundamental academic goals of education.

The CTBS, a test developed by CTB-McGraw/Hill, is administered to thousands of students in California and across the nation. The achievement test battery includes subtests in the following content areas:

- Reading Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension
- Language Expression
- Language Mechanics
- Spelling
- Mathematics Computation
- Mathematics Concepts and Applications

Districtwide results of the 1982 through 1985 CTBS are presented in graphic form in this bulletin. In addition, selected results of individual schools are presented in tables. Test scores such as the CTBS serve as one source of information used to improve the teaching-learning process for all students. However, there are many worthwhile areas of study which are not covered on this or any other standardized norm-referenced achievement test. Also, results of such tests can be affected by many factors such as poor attendance, student mobility, motivation, testing conditions, and how the student feels about taking tests and school in general. Therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution.

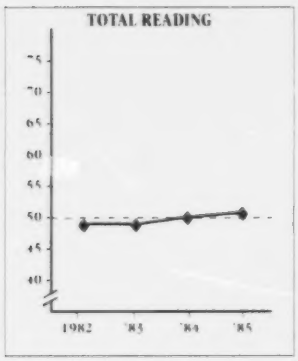
The results presented in this bulletin are given as *median percentile* scores. A percentile score tells you what percent of the students who took the test in the norm group got the same score or lower on the test. The median score is that score which falls exactly one-half of the way through the distribution of scores for a particular group. For example, if a group of fifth graders at a particular school had a median percentile score of 57, that would mean that one-half of the students taking the test scored above the 57th percentile and one-half scored below the 57th percentile compared to the national norm group.

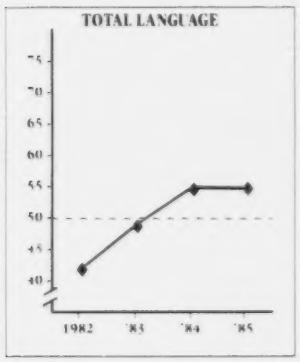
MEDIAN PERCENTILE RANKS

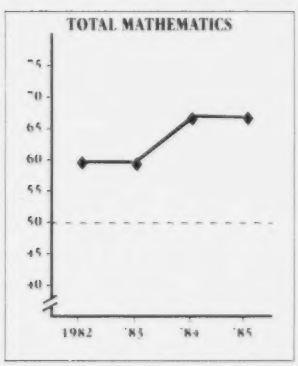
HISTORICAL DISPLAY OF CTBS DISTRICTWIDE TESTING RESULTS

1982-1985

GRADE 5







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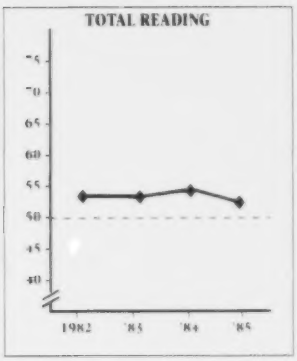
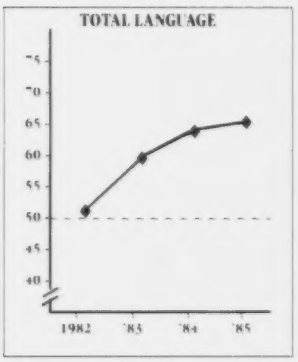
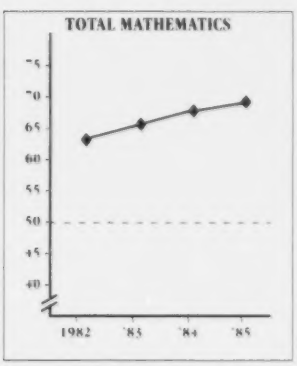
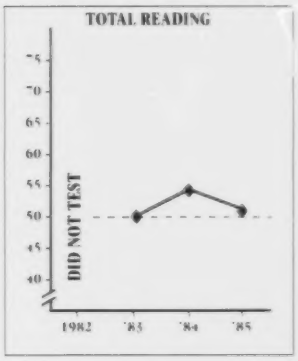
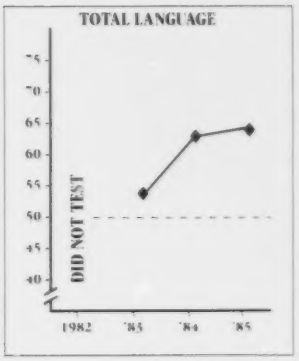


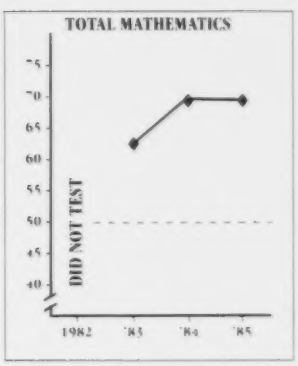




GRADE 9







QUESTIONS

Here are the answers to some frequently-asked questions about testing in the district:

Does the CTBS measure everything we teach in San Diego City Schools?

Not by any means. The CTBS provides only a broad sampling of the major content areas of reading, language arts, spelling, and mathematics. The San Diego City Schools' instructional program includes many very important curriculum areas besides these. This instruction provides reinforcement for individual needs while teaching basic skills that serve as the background preparation from which our graduates may select alternate futures. No standardized norm-referenced achievement test will measure everything that is taught in any specific school district because such tests are developed to test areas common to a large variety of curricula nationwide.

What is a "standardized norm-referenced achievement test"?

"Standardized" refers to the specific controlled ways by which the test is developed and administered. In a standardized test, there are specified time limits as well as prescribed directions and scoring procedures which must be followed to insure that the results are reliable. The term "norm-referenced" refers to a type of test which has been developed and administered to a large number of students from all parts of the nation. By giving the test to a large number of students from many states and then analyzing the results, the test publisher can establish comparative "norms." By using such a test, when we analyze the results of San Diego City Schools' students we can compare their progress to the norms for students throughout the nation who have taken the test. The CTBS we use was normed in the spring of 1980 and the fall of 1981. By using the CTBS, we are able to compare the performance of our students to the performance of students nationwide who may have had similar educational experiences. In short, standardized norm-referenced achievement tests help us in determining the educational needs of students and how successful we are in meeting these needs.

How does San Diego City Schools use the CTBS results to help students?

Achievement test results such as the CTBS scores are one of many indicators of program effectiveness studied carefully by school principals, curriculum specialists, central office administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and students for the overall improvement of instruction. Teachers have a wealth of information on the progress of individual students including hundreds of observations of performance and scores on teacher-made tests which should match the curriculum students have been taught. Achievement test scores and other information for large groups of students can show areas in which instruction seems to help students and areas where adjustment in the curriculum may improve the student's opportunity to learn.

Classroom teachers are, of course, the key to applying test information to help individual students. Teachers can, for example, see that students are given more time, as well as the right materials, to learn skills they may not have yet mastered. Teachers are also able to determine whether or not a student may actually be skilled in areas on the test in which his or her performance was lower than expected. Some students may know the information, but for some reason not be able to do well on a test.

Students and parents can use the test results to help them plan, with the help of school personnel, which courses can highlight a strength or remediate a weakness.

If a student scores below the norm in reading, does that mean he/she is a poor reader?

Not necessarily. It may mean he/she is not reading as well as the "average" student in his/her grade across the country given the fol-

& ANSWERS

lowing conditions. First, it assumes that the test measures the skills the student has been taught. Second, that the test has a representative norm group population. And third, that the student has adequate test-taking skills and was prepared mentally, physically, and emotionally to do the best possible job on the day of the test. Even under ideal conditions it doesn't tell you how well the average child reads or what kind of academic work he/she can do. If most of the students in the norm group read "well," the norm, or "average," represents good reading. Whether the norm group read well or poorly is a judgment the test cannot make. Such decisions must be made by professional educators and parents following careful analysis and interpretation of test results.

Wouldn't it be worthwhile to try to teach all students to perform at or above the national norm?

Yes, but that may not be possible! Let's suppose that to score at the norm on a fifth grade test, a student must score 25 out of 40 correctly. Now suppose we improve the teaching/learning process so that the fifth grade students across the nation score at least 25 and many score much higher. Then you would have all students in fifth grade performing "at or above the norm." Right? Wrong! As the scores have changed, so has their average or norm. If most students perform better, then the norm moves higher and a score of 25 is now below the norm! This is one reason it is important to use up-to-date tests and understand that comparing to a norm group is useful as only one type of information on student achievement.

What test results are being reported for schools?

You'll notice that for each school there are results for those grades tested in the districtwide testing program. We have reported median percentile scores for Total Reading (Reading Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension), Total Language (Language Expression and Language Mechanics), and Total Mathematics (Math Computation and Math Concepts and Applications) at all three grade levels since these are all central to the academic program.

Standardized testing is only one part of the process of pupil evaluation. The main purpose of a testing plan is to provide feedback to teachers, students, and parents for making decisions related to teaching and learning. A secondary but equally important purpose of the testing plan is to provide data for program evaulation so instructional leaders can examine and modify the curriculum.

We are sometimes asked why we do not test every grade level each year with the CTBS. We feel that this would not only burden the students and teachers unnecessarily but that it would create a significant narrowing of the San Diego City Schools curriculum. Using one specific test battery for every grade level every year cannot help but influence curriculum in a restrictive way. If this practice was followed, the curriculum would begin to match the test because public pressure to have high test scores might cause teachers and curriculum developers to concentrate on those skills measured on the test, to the exclusion of other very important skills. This would represent an unhealthy influence over the local curriculum and give a great deal of power to the test publishers.

GRADE 5

DISTRICTWIDE TESTING RESULTS
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS, FORM U, LEVEL G
GRADE 5—APRIL 1985
PERCENTILE RANK OF MEDIAN PUPIL BASED ON NATIONAL NORMS

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	51	55	67
ADAMS	51	54	72
ALCOTT	44	45	60
ANGIER	44	50	60
AUDUBON	39	47	59
BAKER	39	42	55
BALBOA	33	42	50
BARNARD	54	55	60
BAY PARK	51	60	60
BAYVIEW TERRACE	42	45	67
BIRD ROCK	68	71	68
BIRNEY	50	53	74
BOONE	46	58	66
BROOKLYN	39	41	52
CABRILLO	42	48	59
CADMAN	52	61	70
CARSON	40	45	70
CARVER	40	34	45
CENTRAL	29	48	62
CHESTERTON	51	56	71
CHOLLAS	39	45	59
CLAY	46	59	65
CROWN POINT	49	56	62
CUBBERLEY	47	66	62
CURIE	75	81	89
DAILARD	65	66	79
DARNALL	30	39	59
DEWEY	45	57	70

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	51	55	67
DOYLE	75	75	82
EDISON	35	40	44
EMERSON	37	46	59
ENCANTO	51	56	65
ERICSON	65	71	75
EUCLID	40	49	55
FIELD	47	42	77
FLETCHER	44	40	68
FLORENCE	51	61	66
FOSTER	49	55	58
FRANKLIN	51	57	64
FREESE	55	68	79
FREMONT	55	55	50
FULTON	44	53	62
GAGE	75	71	83
GRANT	65	66	75
GREEN	71	71	75
HAMILTON	25	37	47
HANCOCK	44	47	55
HARDY	60	65	72
HAWTHORNE	69	62	79
HEARST	74	73	95
HICKMAN	59	62	73
HOLMES	64	68	82
HORTON	35	48	50
JACKSON	55	52	55
JEFFERSON	36	42	48

GRADE 5

DISTRICTWIDE TESTING RESULTS
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS, FORM U, LEVEL G
GRADE 5 – APRIL 1985
PERCENTILE RANK OF MEDIAN PUPIL BASED ON NATIONAL NORMS

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	51	55	67
JERABEK	81	78	85
JOHNSON	48	61	70
JONES	65	68	67
JUAREZ	57	54	72
KENNEDY	29	35	39
KING	29	30	46
KNOX	37	42	47
LAFAYETTE	59	47	60
LA JOLLA	68	60	73
LEE	50	58	60
LINDA VISTA	23	38	68
LINDBERGH	59	57	61
LOGAN	33	38	53
LOMA PORTAL	76	70	74
LONGFELLOW	65	60	70
LOWELL	36	37	42
MARCY	67	82	86
MARSHALL	40	46	50
MARVIN	70	65	75
MASON	60	68	75
McKINLEY	43	44	60
MILLER	51	50	65
MIRAMAR RANCH	72	70	78
MONTEZUMA	56	78	92
MUIR ALTERNATIVE	35	29	46
OAK PARK	50	46	54
OCEAN BEACH	33	42	58
O'FARRELL S.C.P.A.	57	52	73
PACIFIC BEACH	57	53	64
PARADISE HILLS	53	60	72
PENN	55	58	76
PERRY	50	64	72
ROLANDO PARK	53	52	62
ROSS	55	45	59
ROWAN	55	51	60
SANDBURG	66	74	78
SEQUOIA	51	65	76
SESSIONS	63	61	68
SHERMAN	29	38	49
SILVER GATE	63	63	64
SPRECKELS	69	55	82
SUNSET VIEW	82	78	81
TIERRASANTA	74	76	92
TOLER	70	74	90
TORREY PINES	48	58	70
VALENCIA PARK	35	34	44
VISTA GRANDE	78	78	77
WALKER	54	63	74
WASHINGTON	33	45	60
WEBSTER	43	51	56
WEGEFORTH	65	58	76
BENCHLEY/ WEINBERGER	72	72	75
WHITMAN	34	38	61

GRADE 7

DISTRICTWIDE TESTING RESULTS
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS, FORM U, LEVEL H
GRADE 7—APRIL 1985
PERCENTILE RANK OF MEDIAN PUPIL BASED ON NATIONAL NORMS

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	52	65	68
BELL	55	76	76
CORREIA	49	56	67
EINSTEIN	53	64	71
FARB	57	62	69
GOMPERS	44	63	63
HALE	63	72	65
KEILLER	37	62	57
LEWIS	55	65	67
MANN	43	58	63
MARSTON	51	59	63
MEMORIAL	33	50	53

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	52	65	68
MONTGOMERY	38	58	65
MUIR ALTERNATIVE	51	—	50
MUIRLANDS	61	64	69
O'FARRELL S.C.P.A.	63	76	69
PACIFIC BEACH	58	66	61
PERSHING	55	65	65
ROOSEVELT	49	57	69
STANDLEY	67	76	85
TAFT	58	64	71
WANGENHEIM	63	72	78
WILSON	36	50	61

GRADE 9

DISTRICTWIDE TESTING RESULTS
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS, FORM U, LEVEL J
GRADE 9--APRIL 1985
PERCENTILE RANK OF MEDIAN PUPIL BASED ON NATIONAL NORMS

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	51	64	70
BELL	56	76	76
CLAIREMONT	48	58	59
EINSTEIN	50	64	66
GOMPERS	69	78	85
HALE	51	68	66
HOOVER	36	49	61
LEWIS	62	74	74
LINCOLN	25	37	49
MANN	38	46	62
MEMORIAL	27	43	54
MIRA MESA JR/SR	60	73	80
MONTGOMERY	30	53	68

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL READING	TOTAL LANGUAGE	TOTAL MATH
DISTRICT MEDIAN	51	64	70
MORSE	31	47	54
MUIR ALTERNATIVE	43	—	37
MUIRLANDS	67	74	76
O'FARRELL S.C.P.A.	52	72	61
PACIFIC BEACH	58	67	70
PERSHING	50	61	72
POINT LOMA	58	63	66
ROOSEVELT	43	55	63
SERRA JR/SR	56	66	70
STANDLEY	64	73	83
TAFT	58	70	68

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